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ABSTRACT

These proceedings contain presentations and materials from a conference to discuss the need for a system of lifelong learning for youth and adults with disabilities. Section I, "Welcome and Conference Challenge," presents brief opening remarks by Betsy Brand and Robert Davila. Section II contains an executive summary and the keynote speech, "Turning Dreams into Reality," by Richard Chavez. Section III provides summaries of panel presentations on the topic, "Americans with Disabilities Act: Impact on Adult Learners with Disabilities" (Howard Moses, Deborah McFadden) as well as panelists' responses to questions. Summaries of presentations made at the second general session describing successful prototypical programs that are building effective program linkages are given next. The session was called "Building Effective Program Linkages: Model Programs," and the presenters were Barry Tronstad, Brenda Glass, Mary Kay Peterson, and David Vandergoot. Section IV is a summary of workshop recommendations. Specific recommendations made by each work group are categorized by the title of the group, and each group's declared objectives and specific recommendations are given. Groups focused on the following topics: (1) program improvement; (2) government's role in building partnerships; (3) personnel preparation and research needs for youth and adults with disabilities; and (4) "we are the learners: listen to us." Other contents include evaluations from participants, concluding statements, selected participant comments, and lists of attendees and participants. (YLB)

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PROCEEDINGS OF A CONFERENCE

Building Effective Program Linkages

To establish a coordinated system of lifelong learning for adults with disabilities

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The Offices of

Vocational and Adult Education

and

Special Education and Rehabilitative Services

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WASHINGTON, D.C.

MARCH 11 - 12, 1991

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Building Effective Program Linkages

To establish a coordinated system of lifelong learning for adults with disabilities

OFFICE OF VOCATIONAL AND ADULT EDUCATION 2 *OFFICE OF SPECIAL EDUCATION AND REHABILITATIVE SERVICES*

BUILDING EFFECTIVE PROGRAM LINKAGES

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I.

Welcome and Conference Challenge - Page 5
Assistant Secretary Betsy Brand
Assistant Secretary Robert Davila

II.

Executive Summary - Page 9

III.

Conference Narrative & Individual Interviews - Page 12

IV.

Summary of Workshop Recommendations - Page 20

V.

Appendix - Page 44
List of Attendees

WELCOME AND CONFERENCE CHALLENGE

Betsy Brand

Assistant Secretary
Vocational and Adult Education

Let me welcome you to the Coordination Conference jointly sponsored by the Office of Vocational and Adult Education and the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services.

This is an historic event for the U.S. Department of Education. Our two offices are sponsoring the first national conference to coordinate program resources for a large segment of the population of our nation -- 43 million Americans with disabilities, 40 percent of whom have not completed high school. These Americans include adults who are blind and partially sighted, deaf and hard of hearing, emotionally and mentally ill, learning disabled, mentally retarded, physically disabled or with other disabilities that interfere with learning.

This conference, with its theme, "Building Effective Program Linkages," is very timely and appropriate. For today, with limited resources, we must work smarter at every level -- Federal, State and local -- to accomplish our goal, "of establishing a coordinated educational system of lifelong learning for persons with disabilities." We must include persons with disabilities in every aspect of our society, so that they, too, can enter the mainstream of our nation to enjoy a better quality of life, to be productive members of the work force, and to become responsible citizens.

In 1990, we were challenged by two historic events. The first was the development of the National Education Goals, especially Goal 5 on Adult Literacy and Lifelong learning, which relates to this conference. The second was the signing of the Americans with Disabilities Act by President Bush on July 26th. These two events are the cornerstone and the driving force behind the OVAE/OSERS conference. Goal 5 can be achieved, and the Americans with Disabilities Act will be implemented.

But we have a national dilemma: dropouts from secondary school systems who are unable to compete for jobs or enter college or vocational training programs; and adults who need to be trained or retrained to enter the competitive work force. These individuals, including many people with disabilities, lack basic education skills and in many cases have fallen through the cracks.

Our nation cannot afford to lose this human potential. Out-of-school youth and adults with disabilities can be educated, trained, or retrained to become productive members of our society and desirable employees. This is why this conference and its results will have a lasting impact through the 1990s. The time is now to bring all Americans into the mainstream of our society.

You in the audience represent administrators, practitioners, program directors, researchers, and advocates from more than 30 states throughout the country. You are our experts. We must listen and learn from you on how the Department of Education can effectively provide leadership and bring about positive change as we coordinate our resources to improve programs for out-of-school youth and adults with disabilities.

We have asked you to come to Washington to this conference to work together to clarify issues, solve problems, and make recommendations for future activities. During this conference, you will have the opportunity to discuss four topics that you have helped identify: program improvement and performance standards; partnerships; personnel preparation; and the development of a coordinated delivery system.

These issues are all critical and timely. The recommendations you develop during your workshops will guide us at the Department of Education as we develop technical assistance and research programs and continue to disseminate products on adults with disabilities.

You will be glad to know that coordination in the Department of Education has already begun. This conference has been carefully planned and developed through a joint effort of staff from both OVAE and OSERS. Now, with your help, we will take the next step of planning joint activities to build effective program linkages at the Federal level and, we hope, at the State and local levels.

Our programs in vocational education and adult education, vocational rehabilitation, special education, and correctional education have much to learn from each other. The focus of this conference and our future efforts is on improved comprehensive services to clients.

Already, vocational and adult education are beginning important work on integration of academic and vocational skills. Vocational rehabilitation has always done an outstanding job of vocational evaluation and assessment. Vocational educators can profit from this experience. Conversely, vocational education has done an excellent job of providing students with job readiness and employability skills, which might well be adapted by rehabilitation personnel. Vocational education special needs personnel have also developed an impressive array of placement strategies, which also have implications for colleagues in other programs.

Reauthorization of the Perkins Act, including new initiatives in areas such as school-to-work transition and techical preparatory education, offers exciting opportunities for comprehensive program development at both the secondary and postsecondary levels. However, as we work together at this conference and in the future, we must always remember that our focus is on the program participant, the person receiving our services. We must put aside old turf battles, reach out and use each other's strengths. We do have much that we can learn from each other. We believe that this conference is an important first step, and we are committed to continuing efforts to coordinate and improve OVAE and OSERS services.

I hope you have a productive visit to our nation's capital.

8

Robert R. Davila

Assistant Secretary
Special Education and Rehabilitative Services

**** Presented by Michael Vader***
Deputy Assistant Secretary

I am pleased to welcome all of you to this joint conference between the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services and the Office of Vocational and Adult Education. I know Assistant Secretary Brand shares my hopes that this meeting will yield results far into the future in the form of improved services for adults with disabilities who are either unemployed or underemployed.

I would like to thank all of the individuals on my staff and on Betsy's staff who worked so hard to put this conference together. Also, I would like to thank all of you for taking the time out of your busy schedules to be here with us. There is much that we can learn from one another. I look forward to seeing the results of your efforts as you explore new methods of service delivery for adults with disabilities.

I want to share a few statistics with you. They are quite sobering, and I think they make our mission clear.

A recent Louis Harris and Associates survey reported that 40 percent of the 43 million Americans with disabilities have not finished high school. In actual numbers, we are talking about 17 million people. Their dropout rate is almost two and a half times higher than in the nondisabled population.

In addition, a 1989 survey of persons with disabilities aged 16 and older found that only 25 percent of the estimated 27 million adults with disabilities in this age group are working full time, with an additional 10 percent only working part time. According to the U.S. Bureau of the Census, more than 64 percent of all men with disabilities were totally out of the work force in 1988, as were almost 73 percent of all women with disabilities. By contrast, 70 percent of nondisabled adults in the same age range are in the labor force. The significant point is that more than two-thirds of adults with disabilities are not working at all. Of this group, more than 70 percent say they want to work.

Additionally, among African Americans with a disability, only 22 percent participate in the work force, compared to 79 percent of nondisabled African Americans. Likewise, persons with disabilities of Hispanic origin participate in the labor force at a 23 percent rate versus 74 percent of nondisabled Hispanic persons. Fully 28 percent, or almost three in every 10, working age adults with disabilities have family or personal incomes from all sources that place them below the poverty line.

"Not working is perhaps the truest definition of what it means to be disabled," according to Harris and Associates, following their 1986 survey of disabled Americans. In other words, approximately 12 million adults with disabilities aged 16 to 64 want to work, but can't get a job.

These numbers are disturbing to me, as I am sure they are to all of you. We have to ask ourselves why so many adults with disabilities are unable to obtain full-time, competitive, and rewarding jobs. There is no easy answer to this question.

Although we have made progress in special education and rehabilitation programs, we, like all programs, must improve our efforts to increase the job readiness of individuals with disabilities as they reach adult status. In thinking about how we can best assist this population, I see our job over these next two days as one of developing a spirit of collaboration at the national, State, and local levels to keep young adults in school and to develop strategies to strengthen the transition from high school into adulthood. Our goal must be to develop a coordinated approach to establish program linkages and service connections between adult education, vocational education, special education, and rehabilitative services.

This conference is taking place at a particularly appropriate time. President Bush just recently released a second report to the Governors on the National Education Goals, which were developed at the Education Summit in Charlottesville, Virginia, in 1989.

Goal 5 is concerned with lifelong learning and adult literacy. It states: "By the year 2000, every adult American will be literate and possess the knowledge necessary to compete in a global economy and exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship."

That national goal directly relates to the goals of this joint conference. Through our efforts in implementing the theme of "building effective program linkages," we will work toward establishing a coordinated educational system of lifelong learning for persons with disabilities, combining the best that each program has to offer into something new and valuable.

As the individuals we serve approach that important transitional time between high school and adulthood, we must take care to have systems in place that will support them in making their own best decisions for lifelong productivity and participation in our American Dream. We can do this only if there is a long-standing commitment among educators, rehabilitation professionals, vocational education specialists, and researchers, to work together in partnership to make sure the necessary services are available. We need to be partners right from the start, and maintain and strengthen those partnerships as time goes by.

We need to continue efforts to develop partnerships at all levels in our country, in order to ensure that we remain keyed to the promise of access to quality education and postschool employment for qualified people with disabilities. But we must also remember that even recent landmark legislation like the Americans with Disabilities Act does not in itself guarantee employment for our citizens with disabilities. Jobs will always go to those people who have the basic skills to be able to compete.

When the President recently talked about the American Dream, he said that for most people that means wanting to be part of something larger than ourselves, and the freedom to take command of our future. The American Dream belongs to all of us, including those of us with disabilities. As you meet over the next two days, I encourage all of you to seriously consider in what ways program resources from both OVAE and OSERS can be coordinated so that Americans with disabilities can better participate in this dream.

I am glad to have had the opportunity to welcome you this morning as you begin your work. Thank you all again for being here.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

For the first time, the Office of Vocational and Adult Education (OVAE) and the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS) of the U.S. Department of Education jointly sponsored a national conference on building effective linkages between educational programs that serve Americans with disabilities.

The 108 conference participants from 30 states included representatives from the State and local offices of adult, vocational, and special education; vocational rehabilitation; corrections; GED; local school districts; technical and community colleges; universities; private institutions and community-based organizations; business and industry.

It was a working conference with few formal speeches. The first general session was devoted to the impact of the Americans with Disabilities Act on adult learners with disabilities. The second general session presented a panel from California, Florida, New York, and Pennsylvania describing model programs which have built effective linkages.

But the heart of the conference was the group of four workshops that met for six hours to explore these topics:

1. Program Improvement: A Learner Centered Continuum of Lifelong Learning
2. Government's Role in Building Partnerships: Strengthening Provider Networks for Youth and Adults with Disabilities
3. Personnel Preparation and Research Needs for Youth and Adults with Disabilities
4. We Are the Learners: Listen to Us

Each workgroup divided itself into subgroups to examine specific topics, and then met together to prepare detailed recommendations to present to the entire conference at the concluding session. Their recommendations focused on five central themes:

1. Improved interagency linkage at the Federal level, with a commitment from the U.S. Department of Education, and development of an interagency action plan with regulations and funding for implementation, a common language and common definitions, and direction to State and local governments to encourage interagency collaboration at those levels.
2. Dissemination of information about best practices/exemplary programs and of research findings on serving populations with disabilities, including producing videos and discussion guides for training and establishing a computerized database of successful programs.
3. Closer coordination of existing resources to reduce duplication.
4. Establishment of a regular ongoing mechanism to continue interagency liaison.
5. Follow-up conferences to refine and implement the recommendations and monitor progress in achieving them.

As Dr. Barry E. Stern, Deputy Assistant Secretary, OVAE, said at the conclusion of the conference, *"Our work starts now, to digest your recommendations and find a way to continue this activity. We hope to institute a task force to look at the recommendations and decide what to do with them."*

Michael E. Vader, Deputy Assistant Secretary, OSERS, added that the conference was *"the beginning of a new collaboration among all of us to ensure that individuals with disabilities are involved and empowered."*

LUNCHEON SPEAKER

Turning Dreams into Reality

Richard Chavez
Founder
Chavez and Associates Institute

When Michael Vader asked me to be the keynote speaker, I never realized that I would be speaking before such a hard-working, committed, and distinguished group of educators, experts, and specialists. I appreciate the opportunity to be here and to have a chance to observe you in action in the various workshops. You have an excellent grasp of the important issues and the goal of this conference. There is no question in my mind that all of you have contributed greatly to the success of this conference and the future of all Americans who are disabled. You gave me a big hand of applause; now let's give another warm hand of applause to you, the leaders.

Commitment turns the average into the great, the small into the large, the nonachiever into a genius. It allows the weak to become the strong and will turn the disadvantaged into the chairman of the board. It allows the physically disabled to "walk," the blind to "see," and it will allow any one of us to attack head on the monumental task that lies before us.

When I think of the national education goal related to this conference, that, "By the year 2000, every adult American will be literate and possess the knowledge necessary to compete in a global economy," I am awed by this almost impossible goal. But I often say, "He who attempts the impossible has little competition."

Most people are competing for the crumbs in education rather than reaching for the stars. As educators and leaders in both the private and public sector, we must begin to take positive steps immediately, if we are to build effective program linkages and establish a coordinated educational system of lifelong learning for persons with disabilities.

Several million youth with disabilities will never finish high school. Add to that the 20 or 30 million Hispanics, African Americans, other minorities, and other disadvantaged youth who will drop out of high school between the 9th and 12th grades, and we are surely destined for failure as a society. To expect these youth to compete in a global economy when they are failing on a local level tells me that we have unrealistic expectations and we must take action to change this now.

There is no question that this next decade, which will carry us through the year 2000, will be filled with technological, financial, and industrial opportunities and challenges; challenges that our youth of today will have to meet tomorrow if they are to effectively compete in the job market. Jobs and career opportunities will be abundant, but will the American youth of today be ready for the future of tomorrow?

Being a vocational school owner in the Los Angeles and Washington areas for the last 18 years allows me a great opportunity to interact with thousands of students of all ages. I often tell my students that you must develop a positive mental attitude about yourself, your career, and where you want to be. They must have solid goals and prepare themselves for this era of technology.

I tell them, "Prepare yourself, the future is upon us." There is no question that we are all part of an incredible past, a magnificent present, and a brilliant future, which also belongs to our youth of today! But we must act now. You see, folks, "Positive thoughts not committed to action are like a setting sun." They will fade in the horizon and so will our disabled youth.

We must rise to meet the challenge before us by implementing a strong vocational education system, both on a national and local level, which motivates our youth of today. This vocational system, matched with a powerful remedial and basic education program, will teach the reading and writing skills necessary to do the jobs in the future and develop upward mobility opportunities for our youth in their chosen careers.

We must direct ourselves to building a coordinated effort of vocational education, special education, adult education, and rehabilitation services that link together private industry - major corporations as well as state and local private industry councils. In addition, we must link both small and large companies that have manpower needs with vocational training centers, local vocational programs within our secondary school systems, and community colleges. It's not Chaucer that our disabled and minority children need in the "barrios" and "ghettos" of America today, but concrete partnerships that will strengthen vocational adult and youth provider networks which will lead to meaningful jobs, money, homes, and career opportunities.

But as you know, it's not only vocational and remedial training our youth and adults with disabilities need, but also a well-defined personal development and leadership dynamics program in conjunction with their schooling. This personal development training will strengthen our youth's self-image, improve their self-confidence, help them develop a positive mental attitude, a belief in themselves. It will establish meaningful goals for appearance, interpersonal life, living conditions, transportation, career income, financial planning, and recreation.

Our intent should be to develop our youth, both on a personal and professional basis. Making available to every one of our youth a "success strategy package," and a belief in themselves, that is 90 percent of the battle! Then the future will be ours. Let's leave nothing in the hands of chance. We must become educators who make things happen so that by the year 2000 we don't wake up and wonder what happened.

People often tell me I'm too positive. They say I'm a dreamer, that I need to be more realistic. But what is realism? It's the ability to grab hold of your dreams and make them come true -- that's what's real.

We need to get excited about the future and not be discouraged by the size of the task before us. We must encourage our Federal and State leaders to develop inter- and intra-state agency agreements which coordinate program resources to fund vocational and remedial training centers throughout our country. Let's not turn from the task but attack it head on. Together, we will, we must make a difference.

CONFERENCE NARRATIVE/INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEWS

GENERAL SESSION:
Americans with Disabilities Act: Impact on Adult Learners with Disabilities

Michael Vader moderated the panel presentations on the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) made by Howard Moses, Executive Assistant, Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, and Deborah McFadden, Commissioner, Administration on Developmental Disabilities.

Howard Moses

Mr. Moses said, *"an interagency coordinating council is promoting collaboration and cooperation among all Federal agencies to see that there is consistency in regulations concerning ADA and that technical assistance is provided. EEOC is developing a technical assistance manual which it is hoped will be ready by January 1992."*

He noted that ADA provides civil rights protection to individuals with disabilities, guaranteeing them equal opportunity in employment as well as in public accommodations, transportation, State and local government services, and telecommunications. Mr. Moses concentrated on Title I of ADA involving employment discrimination, explaining that it is patterned after the Civil Rights Protection Act.

Regulations to enforce Title I prohibiting discrimination in employment against a qualified individual with a disability are available for comment until April 29, 1991, with July 26, 1991 (the one-year anniversary of the signing of the Act) the deadline date for all regulations. The regulations will go into effect July 26, 1992, for employers with 25 or more employees and two years later, July 26, 1994, for employers with 15 to 24 employees.

"Although employers will need to provide 'a reasonable accommodation' to qualified individuals with disabilities, they will not have to do this if it would 'impose an undue hardship' on business operations," he explained. He added that Section 503 of the Rehabilitation Act, requiring Federal contractors to enforce affirmative action programs to hire and promote qualified handicapped persons, is undergoing renegotiation.

"There is some fear that employers may establish employment qualifications for a job imposing higher standards that could, in effect, work against people with disabilities," Mr. Moses said. He explained that one provision enables employers to reject applicants or fire employees who pose a direct threat to the health or safety of other individuals in the workplace. A list of diseases that might involve a "direct threat" is to be issued not later than six months after enactment of ADA, he added. Mr. Moses stressed that ADA's section on "Illegal Use of Drugs and Alcohol" is significant and bears a careful reading and understanding.

Deborah McFadden

Deborah McFadden called the Americans with Disabilities Act *"our declaration of independence."* She told of being in the Capitol one day when negotiations were going on for and against amendments that would expand or restrict ADA:

> *"I looked in the gallery and saw people in wheelchairs, people with hearing devices, and thought this is a collage of the American population. They were a microcosm of all those whom this legislation would affect."*

But she cautioned that while the 1990s will have more advances and more movement, the key is making linkages with allies and nontraditional allies:

> *"How we come together is critical to this law. It could take 10 years to see the law have the effect we want it to have. The law may provide access to employment, public accommodations, and transportation, but we still need to battle misconceptions about the disabled. In the past, people got what the institution wanted. Today we need to listen to the consumer, not `here's what we're going to give to you.'"*

She described an Administration on Developmental Disabilities (ADD) survey that interviewed 15,000 individuals, 13,000 of whom were developmentally disabled, about employment, housing, income, etc., and asked if the services were adequate and satisfactory:

> *"In the area of work, the disabled want REAL jobs. Only 20 percent work, with an average salary of $51 per week. Others reported earnings ranging from 49 cents to $1.25 per hour. One once brought home a paycheck for 2 cents!"*

Only 10 percent of the developmentally disabled are fully integrated in schools, Ms. McFadden added, and some schools still have special lunch periods for those with disabilities:

> *"It is going to take people like you in this room to go out and change things. It may not feel comfortable, but change is never comfortable. ADA is a step in the right direction, but just because it passed does not mean it's time to sit back. Instead, it's time to ask where we can make these changes."*

In looking at Title I, Ms. McFadden noted that (1) *"you have to realize that you need an accommodation;"* (2) *"you have to have some clue as to what you need,"* and (3) *"you have to ask for it."* Programs that inform individuals about ADA should be making these points in addition to explaining the Act, she stressed.

> *"In your programs, as you look at them, it's not a good idea to take the easiest groups first, because you are hindering what we've fought for all these years,"* she concluded. *"If you can accommodate and make arrangements for those with the most severe disabilities, then everybody else will fall in place."*

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

In responses to questions, the panelists made these additional points:

- Learning disabilities such as dyslexia and attention deficit disorders are recognized as disabilities under ADA.
- There are laws that do conflict with ADA; this is a defense that could be used by employers if a conflict arises.
- In Texas, a team has been set up to do business-related training about ADA. However, there are rumors that attorneys are training employers about loopholes to avoid ADA compliance.
- Legal remedies for noncompliance include injunctive action, back pay, and reinstatement; punitive damages are not included in the Act.
- EEOC is promulgating five different regulation packages, one of which will deal with reporting requirements.
- Congress has appropriated only $1 million to the EEOC to disseminate information about ADA. $500,000 has been targeted for the EEOC to directly inform individuals and interested groups, and $500,000 to train other organizations to disseminate ADA information to businesses and other interested parties.
- OSERS has $5 million for technical assistance centers throughout the country to provide material free to individuals.
- The Department of Justice also has an ADA pamphlet, available in Braille and audio versions, to serve persons with disabilities.

GENERAL SESSION: *Building Effective Program Linkages: Model Programs*

Dr. Barry Stern, Deputy Assistant Secretary, OVAE, moderated a general session describing successful prototypical programs that are building effective program linkages.

Barry Tronstad

Barry Tronstad, principal of Adult and Continuing Education of Ventura Unified School District, Ventura, California, a light industry community of 80,000, described a three-phase program to build up the vocational and special education programs:

1. Building the traditional adult education program;

2. Changing the secondary approach to bring more special education students into a larger variety of vocational training programs;

3. Developing programs, many of them fee-based, with business and industry.

Over the past five years, the district has moved all classes into the competency-based education (CBE) format, using CBE with regular as well as special education classes to build in the prescriptive approach needed to mainstream students with disabilities into comprehensive vocational and academic programs. The classes include both regular and special populations, and academic and vocational training.

"This was fairly revolutionary. We threw out semester-based programs and put students on individualized contracts that focus on learning style and life skills application of the learned competencies. The spin-off is that special education, which before was isolated with no traditional involvement with regular students, now has opened up to regular high school programs. It was a tremendous success, and also is ideal for our many non-English-speaking students."

For the industry program, the school went outside the traditional adult education mold to develop self-supporting, fee-based vocational programs in such areas as computer repair, drafting, and medical office work. One group included 100-120 back-injured adults aged 35 to 40, some of them difficult to place.

"This is a tremendous transition in their lives, but we have had incredible placements, and they are doing very well."

Now the school district is going out to other agencies, such as hospitals, and contracting with them to provide training for both employees and clients as collaborative efforts.

Brenda Glass

Brenda Glass, project coordinator, Probationers' Educational Growth (PEG), Schwettman Adult Education Center in New Port Richey, Florida, described a grant program to locate, test, and refer probationers who had not completed their high school education, and their family and friends. She developed a demonstration model project to help them earn their GEDs in an effort *"to break the illiteracy-unemployment-poverty-crime cycle in which they were trapped."*

Because of limited funds, Ms. Glass had to use a marketing approach to line up support, developing interagency cooperation between the Departments of Correction and Education, Action, RSVP (Retired Senior Volunteer Program) and Rotary Club. She also enlisted the Private Industry Council which, through its Hire First project, provides job training once participants pass the GED.

"We had a ready group of students ordered by judges into our PEG program. We started with 100 first-time felony offenders, and at the end of the first year, we had 249, including their friends and relatives who also come to learn. After 18 months, we located, tested and referred 500 people, of whom about 100 took GEDs. Of these, 25 percent are family members and friends, so they stay in the program and are more successful."

The project is located in an adult education center, and includes reading assistance up to 4th grade with a private tutor. An intergenerational component is provided through a retirement community, with the project pairing students with retired educators.

"These students never had positive reinforcement before, and education has never been a priority for them. Often they are the first in their family to get a diploma."

Ms. Glass also developed community partnerships. When they had no GED textbooks for adults, she went to the Rotary Club and told them it costs $817 to educate one probationer but $52,000 to build cells and keep them in prison. The Rotary contributed $2,500 to supply books for all the students and pay for the GED test.

Funding for her short-term program will soon run out, so she is hoping to disseminate information nationally. This year she is going around the State to talk to school districts, to help them establish similar programs in their areas.

"This is a cost-effective program. These people are there and court orders bring them in. I tell students, you can have more potential, so they take advantage of the program. We give them support at every step. Probation officers like it because it doesn't cost anything and we keep them informed monthly. Students have to sign in at class, and the teacher marks the hours they are there, so we have proof they attended."

Mary Kay Peterson

Mary Kay Peterson, Director, Elwyn, Inc., Elwyn, Pennsylvania, explained that Elwyn was established in 1868 as the first facility for the mentally handicapped but serves a primarily developmentally disabled population now and also is a nursing home for geriatric care, and persons with mental retardation, head trauma, etc. There are facilities in California, New Jersey, Delaware, Pennsylvania, and Israel.

"Because we have so many different facets all linked together with the community, linkages are important and our goal is to keep the links and make sure community services are available for all. The program includes group homes, with 600 residents on campus and 1,200 in day programs. Vocational training covers seven areas and includes workshop activities centers and Department of Defense contracts in a supported employment program.

"Parents can be resistant after a workshop experience. It is frightening to leave the security of one's home setting. We stress that failure is in not trying and that the child deserves the chance to try."

The Adult Development Center cares for those with more severe problems. *"We're throwing away the pegboards and beads and opening up new avenues. If persons are mobile, they can run a vacuum or fill silverware trays. We have mandatory recycling in Pennsylvania, so they can pick up paper in trash cans in the administrative building, and after performing that task satisfactorily, can be placed to perform similar functions at corporations, such as IBM, etc."*

The Department of Adult Education touches all programs, with Adult Basic Education classes in workshops and literacy classes weekly for those working in the community. The night school is located close to adult education programs in the community (art, dance, chorus, etc.) and is offered in adult-like settings.

"It is important that this not be a juvenile program. Our students go in with other adults going to night classes, and this adds a lot to both groups."

The school Alumni Association is *"our best ad. If someone is doing well, we've done our job well. We offer support through the Alumni Association, and they know they can get support all the time if they have a problem on the job or lose their job. We maintain a strong link."*

David Vandergoot

David Vandergoot, Vice President of the Research and Training Institute of the National Center for Disability Services in Albertson, N.Y., discussed the PEER Regional Network funded by the National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research to improve the service delivery system for employing and educating individuals with disabilities. The network recognizes and evaluates exemplary programs in New Jersey, New York, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands, disseminates information about these programs to service providers and individuals, and provides technical assistance to organizations seeking to replicate exemplary program models.

Dr. Vandergoot explained that the institute has studied more than 20 community-based projects providing community linkages over 10 years. He described common features in programs that were hallmarks of success, based on measurable outcomes, and specific activities in common found in programs that have successfully linked with vocational and educational service providers to provide education and employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities:

1. All linkage programs had established broad community representation, with active employer involvement, regular meetings with staff, participation on advisory councils, and providing advice to students. *"However, there was not much consumer involvement or representation,"* he added, stressing the need to generate that awareness.

2. It took programs at least three years to get going. *"They had to overcome mistrust and work out bugs such as eligibility requirements and State support. You need to have patience."*

3. A key leader is necessary to move things along, usually a service provider, but not necessarily a program manager.

4. One person has to be responsible on a daily basis to make linkages and networking work. *"Funds were never an issue - local, state or federal. You always can find them if you really have a purpose."* Dr. Vandergoot emphasized that practical activities already exist, and it is not necessary to replicate them. These include:

   - Curricula - interpersonal, self management topics;
   - Strategies for job development; and
   - Accessing community resources.

   He also urged directing resources at identifying gaps in services.

Exemplary program features cited from the projects the institute has studied, which are suitable for replication, include:

- Workshops offered for parents, students, and educators on transitional issues;
- Team approach to career development;
- Occupational education component;
- Effective marketing approach;
- Detailed curriculum on preparation for high school equivalency diploma;
- Innovative and proven strategies for developing employment opportunities with local industry;
- Involvement strategies for advisory council; and
- Video production techniques.

"I encourage the conference organizers to have a national dissemination conference focused on these issues where participants can learn how to carry out practical activities with the typical resources we all have."

The discussion following the panel presentation generated a variety of suggestions and ideas. Barry Stern focused on a commonality of the programs presented: *"All met a strongly felt need. Success breeds success."*

One attendee wondered how to publicize these programs, suggesting that ways should be sought to get the media to give at least equal time to solutions that they give to problems. Brenda Glass explained that a TV reporter covered the first GED graduate and his girlfriend, and the Home Shopping Network did a 30-minute video on the program. She added that she gets on every program where adult education or literacy people come together to start to build interest.

Barry Tronstad warned that the hardest clients are high school principals. *"It is hard to try to sell the program to them. We brought over counselors, teachers, parents from other high school districts to see our competency-based vocational education program in person."*

One participant stressed the need for a *"national bringing together, not just dots in parts of the country to energize the country toward the problem of literacy."*

Another emphasized the importance of measurable performance standards, noting that one thing that is not measured is the aspiration of young people -- *"we need to pay attention to them."*

Tim Halnon of the Division of National Programs (OVAE) welcomed suggestions for a dissemination conference to assess needs and bring together clearinghouses and professionals working on dissemination (see page 51 for contact information.)

Others called for more representation from other areas, including mental health, mental retardation, labor and industry, and also from "pure" consumers. As Susan Spungin from the American Foundation of the Blind put it: *"We had professionals here who have disabilities, but we could enrich ourselves by getting input from the real consumer."*

As to ways to create interactive systems, answers included streamlined procedures for eligibility, providing an interagency continuum with agreements and cooperation so there is no duplication, shared assessments and interagency development of assessment tools.

WORKSHOP RECOMMENDATIONS

SUMMARY

Key recommendations from the workshops, as well as from the individual evaluations obtained from participants, centered around these themes:

- Improved interagency linkage at the Federal level, with a commitment from the top down and an action plan to make change happen. Recommendations with this focus also called for development of an interagency action plan with regulations and funding for implementation, closer liaison between agencies, developing common language and definitions, and providing direction and/or a mandate to States and local governments to encourage interagency collaboration at their levels.

- Follow-up conferences to refine and implement the recommendations, to include representation from the Department of Labor, business and industry, unions, health insurance, and consumers, and to encourage similar interagency conferences at State and local levels.

- Dissemination of information of best practices/exemplary program models and of research findings on serving populations with disabilities in adult education and vocational rehabilitation, including showcasing model programs, producing videos and discussion guides for preservice and inservice training, and establishing a computerized database of successful programs.

- Closer coordination of existing resources to reduce duplication and fragmentation, clarify conflicting regulations, and provide more opportunity for joint funding.

- Establishment of a regular ongoing mechanism to continue interagency liaison and provide feedback on progress made in meeting priorities.

Specific recommendations made by each workgroup follow, with the title of each group and its declared objectives.

I. Program Improvement:

A Learner Centered Continuum of Lifelong Learning

OBJECTIVE:

- To develop measurable performance standards for youth and adult learners with disabilities.
- To determine strategies by which the individual plan for vocational education, special education, adult education and rehabilitation can be developed and coordinated.

CHIEF RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE GROUP WERE TO:

- Mandate interagency collaboration in order to receive funding.
- Develop a common working language and definitions.
- Involve the field more in developing regulations, with a review of legislation by interagency and interest groups.

The group developed specific recommendations in three areas: research issues, learner-centered concerns, and interagency cooperation.

RESEARCH:

- Increase emphasis on funded research production and dissemination initiatives through:
  - Development of a new, and sharing of an existing, body of knowledge that focuses on interrelationships of data from adult learning, career training, special education, job skill training, rehabilitation, ESL;
  - Meaningful, useful, and valid impact research by program and learner, with interagency agreements and model programs;
  - Accurate and current demographic research into numbers of persons involved, who they are and where they are; and
  - More emphasis on qualitative research.
- Establish a "boundary spanner" with a designated person within the Department of Education to deal with issues of common interest to different offices, such as:
  - Dissemination of research findings and needs;
  - Rules and regulations;
  - Field liaison;

- Legislative reauthorization;
- Public information; and
- Coordination of research initiatives.

- Establish a multidisciplinary database/information network (such as SpecialNet) that addresses the interrelationships of research findings (as noted above).

- Conduct an interagency-based (Department of Education and Department of Labor) annual national dissemination conference dealing with the interrelationship of research findings and model programs and practices in the above areas.

- Establish a joint Department of Education/Department of Labor task force, with field-based practitioners, to examine and make recommendations concerning differing performance standards, from a research viewpoint:
  - Overlap;
  - Consistency;
  - Definitions; and
  - Language.

LEARNER-CENTERED ISSUES:

- Bring together a select group of specialists to develop Request For Proposals (RFPs) for producing a video-based multimedia system with accompanying discussion manuals, looseleaf notebooks, informational tearsheets, workshop worksheets, etc., focusing on:
  - Awareness and desensitization;
  - Identification of specific disabilities;
  - Observational assessment (functional based);
  - Resources for referral;
  - Operational program systems;
  - Skill assessment procedures;
  - Dissemination at all levels;
  - Annual update to keep abreast of new research and technology; and
  - Outreach through computer-based, nationwide access center.

- Replace all other plans [Individual Education Plan (IEP), etc.] so there is one lifelong plan such as an Individual Learner Centered Educational and Training Plan (ILCETP) with:
  - Assessment;
  - Priority given to individual's goals;
  - Flexibility, including goals and implementation;
  - Identification and sign-off of agencies involved;
  - Inclusion of transition plans;
  - Ways to identify progress toward goal and objectives reached;
  - Annual review, including the individual, to determine what has happened and whether goals have changed; and
  - Consideration of funding sources and expenses, including support and ancillary services.

INTERAGENCY COOPERATION:

- At the Federal level in the Department of Education, bring together the offices of Vocational and Adult Education and Special Education, and Rehabilitative Service in an interagency task force to:
  - Develop interagency agreements;
  - Develop a common language and agreement about definitions of disability;
  - Standardize and prioritize criteria for services;
  - Develop a program evaluation system/process to evaluate the success of these collaborative efforts;
  - Use this model for collaboration to develop interagency agreements with the Department of Labor and the Department of Health & Human Services;
  - Provide leadership training for State leaders and agencies to develop State collaboration of plans and have input into State plans; and
  - Develop a solution to the problem of retaining an individual's history of service that provides centralized access while respecting individual privacy.
- Have State plans include a vehicle for collaboration among agencies and strategies to attract, educate, employ, and retain ethnic minorities with disabilities.

II. GOVERNMENT'S ROLE IN BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS:

Strengthening Provider Networks for Youth and Adults with Disabilities

OBJECTIVE:

To identify methods to coordinate program resources and encourage inter- and intra-agency relationships to enhance service delivery to individuals with disabilities at the Federal, State and local levels.

PRINCIPAL RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Continue the dialogue and have another conference, due to the lack of time to complete the challenge here.
- Assistant Secretaries should recognize the need for a common matrix, across OVAE and OSERS, concerning legislative authority, eligibility of clients, program responsibility, terminology and a common language of communication, research, personnel preparation, outcomes and accountability.

KEY ISSUES:

- Importance of sharing;
- Ability of a State to fund "new" populations;
- Training of agencies and teachers;
- Common terminology for reporting, intake systems;
- Empowerment of clients to be more independent of agencies;
- Less rigidity of agency systems;
- Coordination of services;
- Access to programs that meet client needs;
- An umbrella agency to coordinate services;
- Coordination of Federal programs; and
- Marketing available programs to public and other agencies.

RECOMMENDATIONS AT STATE AND LOCAL LEVELS:

- Develop and agree on a common or shared mission, including outcomes and principles, with significant consumer participation in collaborative efforts.
- Facilitate and support meaningful coordination, with authority coming from the highest level, a commitment to see it happen, a system to enhance coordination and reward participants, and inclusion of consumers and parents in a significant role.
- Inform the public about intra- and inter-agency activities, with efforts made to publicize activities at all levels, to increase and encourage collaboration, and marketing.
- Include instances that demonstrate successful collaborative efforts, especially where there are reduced resources.
- Coordinate dissemination activities, with sharing of mailing lists.

III. PERSONNEL PREPARATION AND RESEARCH NEEDS FOR YOUTH AND ADULTS WITH DISABILITIES

OBJECTIVE:

- To improve personnel preparation, research and other ancillary service needs.
- To identify methods to recruit students and personnel into fields providing these services to individuals with disabilities.

GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Interagency collaboration is the key to improving services for persons with disabilities.
- All personnel preparation activities funded by OSERS and OVAE should encompass training awareness of the Americans with Disabilities Act and special populations, by developing training modules for dissemination.
- OSERS and OVAE should identify, disseminate, and encourage replication of exemplary recruitment and retention programs and activities, such as clearinghouses, workshops, etc.
- An action plan should track recommendations from this conference, with progress on implementation of the plan disseminated to participants on a quarterly basis.
- Participants should be agents for disseminating information from the conference in their respective States.
- A follow-up meeting should be held at the conference of the National Association for Adults with Special Learning Needs in August, 1991.
- OVAE and OSERS should update all memoranda of understanding they have adopted to emphasize collaborative efforts and systems.

RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Recruitment in correctional education: *(Note: * apply to adult and community education)*
  - Increase number of correctional education teacher programs;*
  - Develop correctional education awareness programs using internships;*
  - Develop Federal grants to train correctional educators;*
  - Conduct research on correctional education programs to determine differences, if any, with public education;*
  - Expand all grants that flow to States to allow inservice training for correctional education personnel;* and
  - Include corrections in the State plan as it relates to education.
- Recruitment in transition and job placement:
  - Increase the quantity and quality of transition programs, through an interagency coordinated approach between OSERS and OVAE, including trying to make definitions, policies, and regulations consistent.
  - Establish a system for States and localities to educate teachers and related staff in dealing with persons with disabilities in regular programs.
  - Address the high turnover of direct service staff through a Federal mandate with Federal funding.
  - Increase transition training programs for staff working with adult special needs clients, through increased State and Federal funding specifically targeted for this purpose.
- Recruitment of minority, multicultural and disabled staff:
  - Establish scholarships, tuition payments and other incentives.
  - Develop more positive public relations about the profession (e.g., work with President's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities).
  - Assure that Section 504 regulations and other accessibility requirements are followed.

- Federal grants:
  - Provide assurances that any Federal grant and initiative dealing with direct services includes a requirement for training to assist with retaining staff and also includes administrative staff dealing with program decision making.
  - See that Federal grants are consistent in defining disabilities and explicit in targeting that population.
- Personnel preparation and other ancillary service needs.

FEDERAL ROLE:

- Evaluate, assess and disseminate the availability of transitional training and other services for youth and adults, and identify and replicate models of teacher training for total staff development;
- Mandate and fund activities to develop cooperative/collaborative efforts between and among vocational and special education, rehabilitation, corrections, regular and adult education;
- Provide for collaborative submissions to access crosswalk legislative funding to develop preservice and inservice model personnel preparation programs;
- Develop federal guidelines, similar to the "utilization of resources," that would reflect the requirements of Federal regulations in special education, vocational education, vocational rehabilitation, adult education, corrections and other areas such as labor and welfare.

STATE ROLE:

- See that training programs for teachers, administrators, counselors, and other support staff include no fewer than six semester credits in special education, including:
  - Knowledge of disabilities and modification of curriculum;
  - Knowledge of minorities and culturally diverse students; and
  - Curriculum and other modifications.
- Provide certified/endorsed support service staff to meet the needs of the disabled special needs population, who have an awareness and sensitivity to specific individual support needs.

FEDERAL, STATE AND LOCAL:

Develop cooperative arrangements with business and industry for:

- Adaptations needed;
- Teacher updating;
- Internships;
- On-site training for credit, noncredit;
- Industry representation in the education setting;
- Volunteerism;
- Placement, job shadowing; and
- Peer tutoring, etc.

- General Recommendations:
  - Address increased graduation requirements and the modifications needed for persons with disabilities in dual credit-applied academics, integration of academic and vocational skills, as mandated by Perkins Act.
  - Provide a process for entitlement monies to follow the student/client to ensure education, training, transition, postsecondary options and employment by appropriate service providers.
- Research Strategies:
  - Leadership preparation (Federal-State): OVAE should initiate a policy or regulation requiring each State to develop and maintain a plan for training of vocational educators of special needs students (secondary and postsecondary), to include current vocational educators (and to address turnover rate) needed by type in annual goals or steps, plans for both inservice and preservice training by annual increments, plans for certification and accreditation, and ongoing measures for data collection and program evaluation. Monies for training under the Perkins Act shall be awarded to the responsible State agency based on OVAE review of each State's plan. This State plan shall be complementary and reflect coordination with the Special Education State Training Plan (CSPD - Comprehensive System of Personnel Development), particularly in providing funding for leadership and administrative personnel to provide vocational programs for special populations.

- Policy:
  - OVAE and OSERS should collaborate at the national level and promote interagency collaboration at the State level to:
    - Evaluate the impact of Perkins Act on special populations through independent studies; and
    - Develop guidelines for joint funding across agency lines.
- Research capacity and utilization:
  - OVAE, in collaboration with OSERS, should develop a National Dissemination Plan, which includes funding in small amounts (mini-grants of $10-50,000) to agencies adopting proven exemplary practices. This plan should include identification of exemplary practices by evaluation agencies and review of replication plans.
- Transition and interagency coordination:
  - OVAE should develop a five-year plan for coordination among OVAE/OSERS/Department of Labor/National Institute of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention for program improvements and stimulation of interagency coordination at State and local levels. The plan would include support of long-term transition outcome studies and collaborative projects among institutions of higher education in special education, vocational education, rehabilitation, corrections, including joint grant competitions to allow collaboration among disciplines as well as institutions.
- Evaluation of program effectiveness:
  - Research priority should be given to conduct research syntheses of what exists and draw conclusions for systems change in:
    - Transition strategies and outcomes;
    - Effectiveness of team teaching methods for special needs students in the regular vocational education classroom, with examination of positive benefits to all students in those classrooms; and
    - Effective vocational evaluation/assessment strategies to guide new requirements for individualized planning for vocational education and transition.
- Special training:
  - Provide sufficient funds and require specialized training for those serving individuals with disabilities.
  - Provide sufficient funds to train, evaluate and certify sign language interpreters for the deaf.

IV. WE ARE THE LEARNERS: *Listen to Us*

OBJECTIVE:

- To obtain the opinions of both professionals and learners on what needs to be accomplished in developing a coordinated delivery system.
- To obtain views on effective ways to involve professionals and learners in shaping the delivery system.

FOUR GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS WITH IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES WERE:

1. Develop a case management system that is client/consumer-driven, one that includes diagnosis, assessment, curriculum models, peer counseling, and follow-up services, and that involves interagency cost-sharing with a case facilitator, coordinator or manager. These options should be available to all individuals with disabilities. Key players are local education agencies and divisions of vocational rehabilitation. The implementation strategies are:

   - During reauthorization of the Rehabilitation Act, reflect the new case management role and lifelong career planning for vocational rehabilitation counselor; introduce a Career Plan Status;
   - Include system in Title I(Vocational) or Title VII (Independent Living);
   - Individuals with Disabilities Act guidelines and regulations should reflect their new role of special education teacher as case manager on the IEP, to eventually hand off this role to the vocational rehabilitation counselor;
   - Curriculum should include competency and development of self-advocacy skills;
   - Develop technology to allow students and adults to access services that relate to individual needs, aptitudes, and values in programs that are home based;
   - Develop a case management continuum using electronic computerized cards and videos allowing for multisite service providers, etc.; and
   - Develop a new role and functional statement for the vocational rehabilitation counselor to include but not be limited to knowledge of independent living, postsecondary school services and options, supported employment, recreational/leisure options, agencies, labor market and trends.

2. Implement a comprehensive approach to establish eligibility, assessment, education and training of people with disabilities to access the system of adult education and lifelong learning opportunities.

   - Develop, implement and disseminate local-based model programs for rural/urban/suburban communities.
   - Develop a nationally distributed resource guide with the following components:
     - Role definition and agency function (special education teacher, vocational rehabilitation counselor, adult and continuing education, adult basic education, vocational education;)
     - Second half of resource guide would be a generic presentation with categorical disabling condition breakouts -- with information on ADA, Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA), civil rights, etc., national and State public and private resource agencies;
     - Resource guide should be available in appropriate media (print, Braille, tape, floppy disk, etc.) in English and Spanish, with a 6th grade reading level;
     - Resource guide should be jointly funded by NIDRR and OVAE/OSERS with research on:
       - Survey of existing materials;
       - Development and field testing;
       - Evaluation of effectiveness of final document; and
       - Dissemination plan.
     - A national/State advisory committee should include consumers who have gone through the system, provider of services, resource person in legislature.

3. Conduct research and replicate model programs demonstrating inter-organizational linkages, allowing for a continuum of service options, and develop an annotated resource guide of best practices that utilize linkages.

4. Expand present local/State programs for adults needing literacy services, and include older adults.

   - Locate additional sources of money (JTPA, etc.) for adult education;
   - Remove barriers, such as cross-category eligibility and family income requirements, that prevent effective access to the system;
   - Develop performance-based formula built on reasonable outcomes for the disabled who utilize postsecondary services; and
   - Look at barriers to training/employment that each section/category of the disabled community encounters, and assess end-result of training: skill enhancement, supported or competitive employment, so that they can be fully recognized as a part of the work force/ community with their nondisabled peers.

- Implementation Strategies:
  - Establish oversight council of cooperating agencies, disability groups and individuals, and employers to assess Federal, State and local needs, to report to the President's Committee on Employment of Persons with Disabilities and the President's Task Force on Literacy;
  - At the Federal level, establish an interagency coordinating council, consisting of experts on education, mental health, welfare, labor, justice, Bureau of Indian Affairs, homeless, elderly, displaced - to provide funding for technical assistance and dissemination to State and local service providers, to assist them in implementing national education goals;
  - At the State level, governor-appointed oversight councils of agencies, consumers and employers should assess State needs and current effectiveness of adult education services, collecting data from public hearings, agency studies, and State labor statistics;
  - At the local level, oversight committees of similar entities to those at State level should coordinate existing programs and identify gaps in service delivery systems, and report to a State liaison through regular meetings and recommendations copied to the Governor's and President's Committees; and
  - State level reporting should be coordinated at National Governors Association literacy conferences represented by local/State oversight entities. Federal agency representation should be required to develop effective information flow to Federal level, which would then be able to shape policy on the basis of analysis of state-of-the-art programs built from successful State/local networking efforts.
  - Create two National Request For Proposals:
    - With funding from OVAE/OSERS/Department of Labor, to develop interagency agreements for collaboration to establish case management systems, avoid duplication of services, with cross referrals, effective tracking, systems change, "how to" curriculum, etc., and to create models establishing the effectiveness and/efficiency of interagency collaboration; and
    - To provide training to secondary and postsecondary educators and service providers to learn how to identify and access community resources.
  - Promote self-advocacy:
    - Develop an RFP funded by OSERS/NIDRR to target efforts for a curriculum on self-advocacy for all students and a training program for teachers and service providers, including administrators. The curriculum should be community-based, with experiential learning, tools and techniques to teach self-esteem in a vocational education setting.

EVALUATIONS FROM PARTICIPANTS

During individual evaluations at the conclusion of the conference, participants were asked:

What is your one most important priority of need that OVAE/OSERS can do for you as a result of this conference?

PARTICIPANTS STRESSED THESE MAJOR THEMES:

- A follow-up conference, lasting at least two days or even as long as a week, to refine and activate the recommendations, and to include representatives of the Department of Labor, Congress, consumer and user groups, health insurance and other special interest groups, as well as encouraging interagency conferences at local and State levels.

- Improved interagency linkage with a commitment from the top down and an action orientation to make change happen, including development of an interagency action plan with regulations and funding to implement recommendations, and a *"boundary spanner"* or liaison between agencies.

- Improved information dissemination of best practices/exemplary program models and research findings on serving populations with disabilities in adult education and vocational rehabilitation, including showcasing model programs, producing videos and discussion guides for inservice, and forming a computerized database of successful programs.

- Continuing feedback on priorities accepted by OVAE/OSERS, plans for achieving them, and progress made, along with establishment of a regular ongoing mechanism to continue interagency liaison and dialogue.

- More participation by user groups, consumers, private sector, business and industry.

- Joint advocacy for legislative interagency collaboration, including a Federal initiative to develop national collaboration, and a joint national leadership training program for the States.

- Provide direction and/or a mandate to State and local officials to encourage interagency collaboration, with incentives for cooperation.

- Closer coordination of existing resources, with less rigidity in interpreting regulations, reduction of conflicting regulations between programs, more opportunity for jointly funded RFPs. Or as one person wrote: *"Bring simplicity, clarity, integration and uniformity to a fragmented and sometimes redundant and chaotic multi-tiered delivery system."*

Participants had strong words of praise for the conference, especially for the working conference rather than the usual lecture format. They called it well structured, timely, informative, a *"remarkable union of professionals,"* a *"useful first step in interdepartmental cooperation and coordination,"* and an *"excellent opportunity for interaction nationally"* as well as for networking and providing input.

"It will motivate me to work with my counterparts at the State level to initiate the same type of collaboration," said one participant. *"It is good to see the positive approach to the challenges ahead,"* commented another.

Future workshops and conferences should include more representation from adult and technical education and from employment and training agencies, i.e. JTPA, *"to assure we are all working together."* Another comment urged greater involvement from Congress *"to facilitate action and inspire participants that their efforts would be recognized by policy makers."* Better distribution of participants from different disciplines in the workgroups and more structure for the workgroups might provide more precise recommendations, it was also suggested.

CONCLUDING STATEMENTS

In concluding the conference, Barry Stern urged participants to continue learning from each other.

> *"Get acquainted with your counterparts in adult education, vocational education, special education, and rehabilitative services. Maybe you can have lunch together, or attend each other's staff meetings. The important thing is continual interaction with your colleagues in related fields in order to bring the delivery system of literacy services together. Our resources are not infinite, so we must share our knowledge with one another, especially knowledge gleaned from our research on how people learn and the exemplary programs that help them learn."*

He cited some key words that had been mentioned at the conference.

> *"Systems - participants said we do not have a system to serve adults and youth with disabilities. At best, we have components of a system. Rarely are all the components brought together, certainly not to help adults and youth with disabilities make the transition from school-to-work In addition to instruction in academic and occupational skills, career information, assessment, and guidance as a part of its intake mechanism, and occupational certification, job finding skills, placement services, and follow-up as a part of its evaluation mechanism."*

Other key words he mentioned were gaps, information, awareness, dissemination (for providers and professionals, between public and client, to showcase what works), front-end accountability, case management, evaluation of outcome, consumer, collaboration, and coordination.

> *"I am pleased to hear about exciting solutions. Our work starts now, to digest your recommendations and find a way to continue this activity. Betsy Brand and Bob Davila have asked us for a debriefing on what we have learned. They want to be involved in shaping what goes on. We hope to institute a task force, to look at the recommendations and decide what to do with them."*

Michael Vader noted that the conference work began seven months ago, emphasizing the importance of the collaborative effort to plan it.

> *"Special education and rehabilitation services generally do not have much collaboration, but we bridged the gap and it worked exceptionally well. The conference is a good example of what happens when you bring knowledgeable people together to discuss issues. I am impressed with your recommendations and anxious to see the proceedings report."*

> *"It is important that you don't wait for us to get back to you. I encourage you to go home and reach out to other participants and to the Department of Education. Keep the dialogue going. Our doors are open for an ongoing exchange of information."*

He noted that a follow-up meeting would be held at the conference of the National Association for Adults with Special Learning Needs, August 7-10 in Tysons Corner, Virginia (see page 43 for more details).

"It's the beginning of a new collaboration among all of us to ensure that individuals are involved and empowered."

SELECTED PARTICIPANT COMMENTS

Gwynne Washington

Gwynne Washington from the Department of Corrections in Lorton, Virginia, who is president-elect of the Federal/State Association of Correction Education, was pleased that the corrections sector had been included in the conference.

> *"We have the same type of educational needs as any school district," she noted, as well as a full array of programs -- adult basic education, vocational education and special education. "We are particularly pleased to have someone at the Corrections Desk in the U.S. Department of Education whom we can meet with and who recognizes that corrections, in fact, does need to be included in this whole area."*

Helen Miller

For Helen Miller, who is a specialist in correctional education for the Maryland Department of Education, the conference represented an opportunity to look for better linkages between special education and vocational education.

> *"Vocational education teachers often are afraid that they won't be able to address the needs of these students, and yet it's so important for these people to get meaningful training."*

Ms. Miller works directly with 10 major institutions, each of which has a school and provides special education for students with disabilities. Maryland has a nationally acclaimed program for illiteracy in prisons, developed with Johns Hopkins University. The program emphasizes peer tutoring with inmates who have had special training work with fellow prisoners on a one-to-one basis.

"The results have been dramatic," Ms. Miller notes. Now she is hoping there will be better linkages and support services to enable these individuals to access further education, vocational rehabilitation and work once they leave the correctional system.

Iva Presberry

In Missouri, says Iva Presberry, who is supervisor, Division of Vocational and Adult Education--Special Needs and Guidance Services, *"we try to provide vocational education on a one-to-one level. If an individual can't master the full program, we can identify certain skills and design a program. For example, someone who can't do all the tasks required of an automotive mechanic might be able to learn to be a good brake repair person."*

It is essential, she stresses, for business and industry to recognize that adults with disabilities can provide a service for them.

> *"There are so many unfounded taboos out there. People do not understand the abilities of individuals with disabilities. We spend too many dollars supporting people who want to support themselves."*

In participating in the conference, Ms. Presberry hopes that clear ideas will emerge about how to set up cooperative relationships with business, industries, and Federal, State, and local entities to accomplish the goals.

> *"Strong cooperation and linkages should help groups better utilize the dollars they have to work with. Otherwise, there just isn't enough money for all this to happen."*

Carolyn Maddy-Bernstein

Carolyn Maddy-Bernstein is director of the Technical Assistance to Special Populations Program (TASPP), housed at the University of Illinois. Part of the National Center for Research and Vocational Education mandated by the Perkins Act, the program maintains contact with all 50 States and the District of Columbia interpreting research and providing up-to-the-minute data.

> *"If you need to know about team parents, for example, we can get you names, annotated information, contacts in your State, just about everything you need, and it's all recent, everything since 1985."*

One of the major projects has been collecting model programs and then validating components that make them exemplary.

> *"We hope the conference will be an impetus to starting a national movement to find more exemplary programs. The ultimate goal would be to develop whole units that would address a disabled person's needs - social, health, employment, etc. - in one location."*

> *"Way down the road, it would be good to be able to look at all the barriers that stop a person from succeeding."*

Debra Colley

New York has been involved in lifelong learning, developing policies on linking services from birth to death, including educational programs, support services, job-related activities, and agencies and providers that assist with this, explains Debra Colley.

Ms. Colley is coordinator of the Division of Program Development, Technical and Support Services, Office of Vocational and Educational Services for Individuals with Disabilities.

> *"We have a strong focus on transition from secondary school to adult and continuing and higher education to work. We have worked effectively with other agencies - the Interagency Council on Vocational Rehabilitation promotes cross-system training - and we have developed a standard referral form focusing on provision of nonduplicating services."*

New York wants to work with other States and at the Federal level to implement this at all levels.

> *"We welcome strong support at the top from the lead people. We want to show what we are doing at the state level, and learning about what others are doing can move us along further. This is a first good step to see what we have already and how we can better coordinate and link."*

David Stockford

> *"I am pleased to see the two assistant secretaries bring these groups together and stress the shared mission,"* said David Stockford, Maine's director of special education. *"Too often we point the finger when we don't understand each other's roles and limitations."*

Stockford indicated a need for a matrix identifying issues of enabling legislation, program responsibilities, eligibility requirements, and agreement on respective outcome measures.

> *"These are not consistent. Until we have that, we can't move too far. But we can begin in education. There is interagency collaboration in Maine that reflects our small size. We established it early with the Governor's Human Resource Development goals requiring all departments to sit down and look at improving the work force. Now we understand the roles of different agencies better."*

John Fenoglio

"This is an opportunity to have a dialogue with other individuals who recognize the need for change," stressed John Fenoglio, deputy commissioner of the Texas Rehabilitation Commission.

> *"Many States, Texas in particular, have recognized the shortage of resources because of the need to coordinate and interface services. Part of the issue is that even if we had all the money in the world, we couldn't come up with enough talented and innovative people. The people resource is causing a mandate by consumer organizations in our State: the continuation of the status quo is simply not good enough."*

Fenoglio emphasized the need for critical investigation of the quality of rehabilitation services. He pointed out that when clients call for timeliness, they mean their time frame, not that of the providers.

> *"Case management is a fallacy. They really want availability of simplistic processes through which they can access the service system in an uncomplicated way. A case manager won't resolve this; it only adds another layer to the complexity. We need to simplify the access process and the availability of information so the people can self-advocate for their needs."*

K. Owen McCullough

State agencies can collaborate but there are restrictions placed by State finances and administration often at the Federal level, such as OMB restrictions or legal constraints, cautioned Ken McCullough, Executive Director of Adult and Community Education, Tennessee State Department of Education.

> *"We have interagency collaboration in our State, but it would be helpful to have Federal departmental secretaries identify issues at their level for developing partnerships, problems they contend with, barriers to developing linkages. We need a better feel for the Federal barriers, and more understanding of specific regulations, process requirements and day-to-day problems Federally. I'm comfortable with State and local partnerships but uncertain how Federal legislation and regulations help or hinder me."*

McCullough also noted that Tennessee communities are opening up schools from early morning to late at night, with GED, adult education, and culturally oriented family literacy programs.

Jean Lowe

The GED Testing Service in Washington, D.C., is issuing a new publication, "GED Tests for Adults with Specific Learning Disabilities," reported Jean Lowe.

"There was a big need for this. We are trying to standardize procedures for administering the test and encouraging states to improve outreach to these groups."

The GED Testing Service issues special editions of the test, and accommodations such as using Braille, audio, or a recorder, having additional time and dictating answers can be requested.

"Our interest is in improving services to adults with disabilities. The only way is to work together. Building program linkages is how it happens."

Jeffrey Hipskind

Jeffrey Hipskind, assistant director of special education, Tucson Unified School District, gained information just from informal conversations during the conference about common problems and solutions.

"We want to tell folks in Washington what we need locally and what legislation should address -- and get information about interpretation of Perkins Act moneys, how to establish effective programs, how to combine resources of special, secondary and vocational education."

He praised opportunities at the conference to provide input and influence policy making to "make our jobs in the trenches easier and better."

Mary Ann Corley

"This conference brings together people from different disciplines to discuss issues none of us can tackle alone," maintained Mary Ann Corley, state administrator of the GED Testing Program, Maryland State Department of Education."

> *"It has been very helpful to meet and share ideas with other disciplines and other practitioners. This working conference is much more helpful than listening to speakers."*

She expressed hope that the plan for action would give direction to Federal, State and especially local levels.

> *"Too often, nothing changes. We don't want it to end with this meeting."*

Ms. Corley is ready to move the discussion along: she is co-chair of the 1991 conference of the National Association for Adults with Special Learning Needs, "Bringing the Movement Together," to be held August 7-10 in Tysons Corner, Virginia. Additional information is available from her at 200 West Baltimore St., Baltimore, MD 21201; (301)333-2280; or Joseph Nardini, education program specialist, New Jersey Department of Education, 225 West State Street, CN500, Trenton, NJ 08625; (609)777-1468.

Other comments

"It seems as though there is a gap in the connections between the various programs. In Maine, Massachusetts and New Jersey, the governors have been trying to put together councils that will deal with all the human resources and service programs and look at them as one entity. There is a lot of duplication and we need to cut through that thicket." - **Pierce A. Quinlan**, executive vice president, National Alliance of Business.

"As we look at measurable performance standards, we also need to look at social and behavioral standards which are very important in the workplace. Interpersonal skills are essential, yet traditionally we have not had courses in this area." - **George Yard**, professor, Department of Behavioral Studies, University of Missouri.

"We need to make certain that we bridge the gap between the researcher and what is happening in the field. We want to facilitate independence, community integration, and increased freedom of choice for people with disabilities." - **William Graves**, director, National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research, OSERS.

APPENDIX

List of Attendees

Aylward, Rayna
Executive Director
Mitsubishi Electric America Foundation
Mitsubishi Electronics America, Inc.
816 Connecticut Ave., N.W., Suite 600
Washington, DC 20006
(202) 223-3424

Bennett, Patricia L.
Section Chief
Adult and Community Education
Maryland Department of Education
Baltimore, MD 21201
(301) 333-2178

Benziger, Kathyrn
Consultant
Box 1216
Rockwell, TX 75087
(214) 771-8005

Bernstein, Carolyn Maddy
Project Director
University of Illinois (NCRVE)
1310 S. 6th St.
Educaiton Bldg., SP 345
Champaign, IL 61820
(217) 333-0807

Bicanich, Eleanor
Special Vocational Education Services
Pennsylvania State University
101 Ostermeyer - University Drive
McKeesport, PA 15132
(412) 675-9065

Black, J. B.
Vice President
J. Clifford MacDonald Center
434 Boy Scout Blvd.
Tampa, FL 33607
(813) 870-1300

Bowser, James M.
Vice President
Hocking Technical College
3301 Hocking Parkway
Nelsonville, OH 45764
(614) 753-4192

Richard Chavez
Founder
Chavez and Associates Institute
7668 Telegraph Road
City of Commerce, CA 90040
(213) 726-2372

Colley, Debra
Division Coordinator
Office of Vocational & Education Services for
Individuals with Disabilities
1 Commerce Plaza
Room 1606
Albany, NY 12234
(518) 473-4381

Corley, Mary Ann
GED Adminisrator
Maryland Dept. of Education
200 W. Baltimore St.
Baltimore, MD 21201
(301) 333-2280

Crawford, Robert
Chief Administrator
Life Development Institute
1720 E. Monte Vista
Phoenix, AZ 85006
(602) 254-0822

Cretella, Jay
Director of Adult Education
Wallingford Public Schools
Hope Hill Road
Wallingford, CT 06492
(203) 294-5932

Davis, Jean Cary
State Supervisor
West Virginia State Department of Vocational,
Technical & Adult Education
1900 Washington St.
Charleston, WV 25305
(304) 348-2349

Day, Osborne
International Executive Service Corps
1400 20th St., N.W.
Washington, DC 20036
(202)653-6279

Emerson, John
Washington Research Institute
180 Nickerson St.
Suite 103
Seattle, WA 90109
(206) 285-9317

Fenoglio, John
Deputy Commissioner
Texas Rehabilitation Commission
4900 N. Lamar Blvd.
Austin, TX 78751
(512) 483-4000

Fisher, Adam W.
State Supervisor of Vocational Education
Delaware State Department of Education
P.O. Box 1402
Townsend Bldg.
Dover, DE 19903
(302) 739-4681

Franklin, Edward
Associate Dean
Johnson County Community College
Overland, KS 676210
(913)469-8500

Gadson, Ronald
Assistant Director
D. C. Public Schools
Adult & Community Education
601 15th St., N.E.
Washington, DC 20002
(202) 724-4211

Geisel, Ritchie
President
Recording for the Blind
20 Roszel St.
Princeton, NJ 08540
(609) 452-0606

Glass, Brenda
Project Coordinator
Probationers' Education Growth
Schwettman Adult Education Center
New Port Richey, FL 34652
(813) 842-5714

Gonzalez, Patricia
NASDSE, Inc.
2021 K St., N.W.
Washington, DC 20006
(202) 296-1800

Greenan, James P.
Professor
Purdue University
South Campus Courts, F-23
W. Lafayette, IN 47907
(317) 494-7290

Guyer, Barbara
Director
H.E.L.P. Marshall Univiversity
110 Jenkins Hall
400 Hal Greer Blvd.
Huntington, WV 25755
(304) 696-6252

Hanson, Mark
Director, Adult Education
Southeastern Regional Resource Center
210 Ferryway, SR 200
Juneau, AK 99801
(907) 586-6806

Hardman, Patricia K.
Director, Woodlawn Academy
4745 Centerville Rd.
Tallahassee, FL 32308
(904) 893-2216

Heffron, Tom
Consultant
Wisconsin Board of Vocational, Technical,
& Adult Education
310 Price Pl.
P.O. Box 7874
Madison, WI 53707
(608) 266-3738

Hipskind, Jeff
Assistant Director of Special Education
Tucson Unified School District
P.O. Box 40400 - 1010 E. 10th St.
Tucson, AZ 85717
(602) 891-3000

Holland, Janice
Chief
Education and Community Services
West Virginia Division of Rehabilitation Services
P.O. Box 1004
Charleston, WV 25112
(304) 766-4600

Hubbuch, Gloria
Supervisor
Adult Basic Education
Indiana Deptartment of Education
State House, Room 229
Indianapolis, IN 46204
(317) 232-0522

Hurley, Kathleen
Program Specialist
Texas Rehabilitation Commission
4900 N. Lamar Blvd.
Austin, TX 78751
(512) 483-4000

Jones, Otho
State Director
Chief State School Officer
State Education Agency for Vocational & Adult Education
26th & Benning Rd., N.E.
Washington, DC 20002
(202) 724-4178

Jordan, Dale
Director
Jones Learning Center
University of the Ozarks
Clarksville, AR 72830
(501) 754-3839

Kidder, Carolyn Buell
Reading Disability Specialist
39A Lee St., Apt. 5
Cambridge, MA 02139
(617) 661-3304

Kochhar, Carol
Professor
George Washington University
Department of Teacher Preparation & Special Education
2201 G St., N.W., Suite 524
Washington, DC 20005
(202) 994-1536

Kramer, Michael
Director
Young Adult Institute/Workshop, Inc.
460 W. 34th St.
New York, NY 10001
(212) 594-1958

Lambert, Ruth M. H.
State Project Coordinator
New Hampshire Job Training Council
64B Old Sun Cook Rd.
Concord, NH 03301
(603) 228-9500

Leconte, Pamela
Professor
George Washington University
Department of Teacher Preparation & Special Education
2201 G St., N.W., Suite 524
Washington, DC 20005
(202) 994-1536

Lowe, Jean
Assistant Director
GED Testing Service
1 Dupont Circle, N.W.
Washington, DC 20036
(202) 939-9490

Maloney, Justine
ACLD, INC.
4156 Liberty Road
Pittsburg, PA 15234
(703) 243-2614

Martin, Edwin
President
National Center fofr Disability Services
201 I.U. Willetts Rd.
Albertson, NY 11507
(516) 747-5400

McCullough, K. Owen
Executive Director
Division of Adult Education
1130 Menzler Rd.
Nashville, TN 37210
(615) 741-7054

Meyer, Dale
Special Programs Coordinator
Northern Kentucky State Technical School
1025 Amsterdam Rd.
Covington, KY 41011
(606) 431-3114

Miller, Helen E.
Correction Special Education Specialist
Maryland Dept. of Education
200 W. Baltimore St.
Baltimore, MD 21201
(301) 333-8003

Morgenthaler, Sharon
D. C. Public Library
901 G St., N.W.
Washington, DC 20001
(202) 727-1616

Murray, Morris
Supervisor of Special Populations
Mississippi State Education Department
P.O. Box 771
Jackson, MS 39205
(601) 359-3467

Noyes, Julia
Director
Productive Youth Project
Colorado State University
650 Matthew St.
Fort Collins, CO 80524
(303) 491-5930

Payne, Mario
Staff Associate
Heath Clearinghouse
American Council on Education
1 Dupont Circle
Washington, DC 20036
(202) 939-9320

Payne, Nancie
Director
Payne and Associates
1023 S. Adams, Suite 130
Olympia, WA 98501
(206) 357-6214

Pear, Ruth
Specialist in Programs and Services
Maryland State Department of Education
200 W. Baltimore St.
Baltimore, MD 21201
(301) 333-2075

Peterson, Mary Kay
Director of Adult Education
Elwyn, Inc.
111 Elwyn Rd.
Elwyn, PA 19063
(215) 891-2220

Presberry, Iva V.
Supervisor
Special Needs and Guidandce Services
Missouri State Department of Elementary
& Secondary Education
P.O. Box 480
Jefferson City, MO 65102
(314) 751-3591

Quinlan, Pierce A.
Executive Vice President
National Alliance of Business
1201 New York Ave.
N.W., Suite 700
Washington, DC 20005
(202) 289-2804

Rasmussen, Beth
Probationers' Education Growth
Schwettman Adult Education Center
New Port Richey, FL 34652
(813) 836-3433

Richter, Merry
Mitsubishi Electric America Foundation
Mitsubishi Electric America, Inc.
816 Conn. Ave., N.W.
Suite 600
Washington, DC 20006
(202) 223-3424

Rothenbacher, Carie
Instructor
George Washington University
2632 Wagon Drive, 2B
Alexandria, VA 22303
(202) 994-1530

Sarrette, Sheila
Project Director
National Center for Disability Services
201 I.U. Willetts Rd.
Albertson, NY 11507
(516) 747-5400

Schelly, Cathy
Co-Director, Transition Service
Colorado State University
303 Occupational Therapy Bldg.
Fort Collins, CO 80523
(303) 491-5930

Spikes, W. Franklin
Chairman, Dept. of Adult Education
Kansas State University
351 Bluemont Hall
Manhattan, KS 66506
(913) 532-5535

Spungin, Susan Jay
Associate Executive Director
American Foundation for the Blind
15 W. 16th St.
New York, NY 10011
(212) 620-2031

Stockford, David
Director
Division of Special Education
State Department of Education
State House Sta. #23
Augusta, ME 04333
(207) 289-5800

Stout, C. Fred
Director, Work Connection
1222 N. Maine St.
Suite L-25
San Antonio, TX 78212
(512) 226-1468

Tregaskis, George K.
Associate in Continuing Education
New York Department of Education
The University of the State of New York
Empire State Plaza
Albany, NY 12234
(518) 474-8703

Tronstad, Barry
Principal
Adult and Continuing Education
Ventura Unified School District
3777 Dean Drive
Ventura, CA 93004
(805) 650-8573

Vandergoot, David
Vice President
National Center for Disability Services
201 I.U. Willetts Rd.
Albertson, NY 11507
(516) 747-5400

Washington, Gwynne H.
President-Elect
Federal/State Association of Correction Education
Department of Corrections
P.O. Box 229
Lorton, VA 22199
(703) 643-1782

Weeks, Reaver
Coordinator
South Carolina Department of Corrections
Stevens Correctional Institute
4546 Broad River Rd.
Columbia, SC 29210
(803) 737-9667

Westbrook, John D.
Director
Regional Rehabilitation Exchange
Southwest Education Development Laboratory
211 E. 7th St.
Austin, TX 78701
(512) 476-6861

Wittman, Wayne
Minnesota State Services for/the Blind
1745 University
St. Paul, MN 55104
(612) 642-0858

Williams, Helen
Director
Special Programs
Virginia Department of Correctional Education
James Monroe Bldg.
7th Floor
Richmond, VA 23219
(804) 225-3310

Yard, George
Professor
Department of Behavioral Studies
University of Missouri
8001 Natural Bridge
St. Louis, MO 63121
(314) 553-5782

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION PARTICIPANTS

OSERS Staff Participants

Administration

Michael E. Vader
Deputy Assistant Secretary
(202) 732-1265

Wendell S. Johnson
Special Assistant
(202) 732-1274

Jean Holmes
Secretary
(202) 732-1265

Charles Reilly
Ph.D. Candidate Intern
(202) 732-1276

Rehabilitative Services Administration

Nell C. Carney
Commissioner
(202) 732-1282

Fred Isbister
Chief of Supportive Employment Services
(202) 732-1297

Tacey Clausen
Special Assistant
(202) 732-2239

William Corley
Vocational Rehabilitation Program
(202) 732-1333

Office of Special Education Programs

Judy Schrag
Director
(202) 732-1007

Michael Ward
Chief, Secondary Education/Transition Branch
(202) 732-1163

Edward T. Wilson, Sr.
Education Program Specialist
(202) 732-1121

Betty Baker
Coordinator, Personnel Preparation
(202) 732-1264

Martin J. Benton
Education Program Specialist
(202) 732-1028

Deborah Havens
Education Program Specialist
(202) 732-1094

Joseph Rosenstein
Education Program Specialist
(202) 732-1126

JoAnn Swaney
Education Program Specialist
(202) 732-1047

Karen Barnes
Ph.D. Candidate Intern
(202) 732-1554

National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research

William Graves
Director
(202) 732-5106

Joseph Fenton
Special Assistant
(202) 732-1143

Emily Cromar
Vocational Rehabilitation Program Specialist
(202) 732-1190

Paul R. Ackerman
Executive Director, Interagency Committee on Disability Research
(202) 732-1115

Delores L. Watkins
Vocational Rehabilitation Program Specialist
(202) 732-1195

OVAE STAFF PARTICIPANTS

Administration

Betsy Brand
Assistant Secretary
(202) 732-2251

Barry Stern
Deputy Assistant Secretary
(202) 732-2251

Nina Loewer
Secretary
(202) 732-2251

Division of Vocational and Technical Education

Winifred I. Warnat
Director
(202) 732-2241

Catherine B. Junge
Education Program Specialist
(202) 732-2427

Issac Wilder III
Education Program Specialist
(202) 732-2435

Division of National Programs

Howard F. Hjelm
Director
(202) 732-2350

Timothy D. Halnon
Chief, Program Improvement Branch
(202) 732-2359

Gail Schwartz
Education Program Specialist
(202) 732-2359

Division of Adult Education and Literacy

Joan Y. Seamon
Director
(202) 732-2270

Julia R. Shepard
Chief, Program Improvement Branch
(202) 732-2385

Ronald S. Pugsley
Chief, Program and Services Branch
(202) 732-2272

James T. Parker
Education Program Specialist
(Senior Program Advisor)
(202) 732-2399

Rebecca M. Holcomb
Confidential Assistant
(202) 732-2234

William R. Langner
Education Program Specialist
(202) 732-2410

Mary C. Lovell
Education Program Specialist
(202) 732-5158